

CHAPTER XXVII

THE RECALL OF SIR IAN HAMILTON

THE decision to send troops to Salonika immersed the British Government in a sea of new troubles.

The promise to send this help had been made at the urgent request of the Serbian and Greek Governments. But it soon transpired that so far as Greece was concerned the request had been made without the consent of her king. When Constantine heard that Allied troops were coming from Gallipoli,¹ he not unnaturally concluded that Britain did not intend to persevere with her effort to force the Straits. Convinced at last that the Allies must lose the war, he determined that the only safe course for Greece was to preserve a strict neutrality.

Meanwhile, at an Allied conference at Ca'ais on the 5th October, Lord Kitchener had agreed that in addition to the 10th Division from Gallipoli three British divisions from France should be sent to Salonika. It was further agreed by the Allied ministers that the Gallipoli peninsula should on no account be abandoned. But late that evening the Salonika plan was thrown into the melting pot by the news that King Constantine had repudiated his Premier's policy, and that Venizelos had resigned.

Strenuous efforts were made to induce the king to fulfil his treaty obligations, but they met with scant success. On receipt of a chilly promise that the landing of Allied troops would not be obstructed, the Allied Governments agreed that the movement of one British and one French division from Gallipoli to Salonika should continue. But Constantine was insisting that his country must remain neutral, and in view of this attitude, and of the growing fear that it was in any case too late to save Serbia from invasion,² the British Government were unable to frame their future policy.

¹ One of the officers sent ahead to Salonika to arrange the landing of troops was Br.-General A. B. Hamilton. When news reached Athens that "General Hamilton" was there it was presumed that this was Sir Ian Hamilton, that the peninsula was about to be evacuated and the Expeditionary Force transferred to Greek soil.

² The General Staff at the War Office had offered this advice in an appreciation dated 2nd October, and had urged that no British troops should be sent to Salonika.

Oct. The situation on the 7th October was black. In France the Loos—Champagne offensive was ending in disappointment; and the British casualties alone were known to exceed 50,000, or more than double the total losses in the offensive at Anzac and Suvla. Ian Hamilton in Gallipoli was reporting an alarmingly increased sick-rate. In the Balkans Austro-German forces were attacking the Serbian northern frontier, and there could no longer be any doubt that Bulgaria would soon co-operate by attacking from the east. Nothing could now prevent the opening of the Belgrade—Sofia—Constantinople railway; and to the existing anxieties of the British Government was added the fear that if the Turks were reinforced by German howitzers and munitions Sir Ian Hamilton's army might be driven into the sea. At a meeting of the Dardanelles Committee the Prime Minister urged that, whatever else was decided on, a plan for the evacuation of the peninsula should be worked out at once.

Faced by these difficulties the Government decided—for the first time since the beginning of the Gallipoli campaign—to call for the combined advice of the Admiralty War Staff and the General Staff at the War Office.

This appeal for professional advice synchronized with the appointment of a new Chief of the Imperial General Staff. Sir James Wolfe-Murray had lately been forced by ill-health to resign his post. Lieut.-General Sir Archibald Murray¹ had succeeded him on the 26th September, and was striving to secure for the General Staff at the War Office the status and authority it had lacked since the majority of its senior members had been posted to the British Expeditionary Force on the outbreak of war.

Britain had already paid dearly for that cardinal error of denuding the War Office of its most trusted officers in August 1914. The present dilemma of the Government was certainly due in part to unavoidable causes—to the nation's unreadiness for war the previous year, to the necessity for considering French susceptibilities, and to the difficulty, inherent in any alliance, of securing unity of effort without unity of control. But the Government's task had been rendered trebly difficult throughout the year by the absence of a trusted body of experts to offer unbiased professional advice upon the general conduct of the war. For lack of this advice, Britain's wavering war

¹ Sir A. Murray was the first C.G.S. of the B.E.F. in France, and had latterly been Deputy C.I.G.S. at the War Office.

policy in the spring and summer of 1915 had violated every principle of sound strategy.

Committed up to their eyes since the outbreak of war to land operations on the Western front in France, the Government had drifted in April 1915, without the semblance of a plan, into a military campaign in Gallipoli. Without sufficient ammunition for one theatre, the country had found itself engaged in two.¹ After the initial deadlock which followed the April landings, when modest reinforcements might well have led to victory, the invading army had been starved through protests from France that reinforcements for the Dardanelles were merely prolonging the war. But the Gallipoli operations, though ill-supported, had been allowed to drag on, while the main effort continued to be made in the Western theatre of war.

Later, in June, when offensive operations in France—with all too little ammunition—had disclosed their limitations, and when the British commanders in that theatre were themselves in favour of postponing another attack till the spring of 1916, the Government had at last felt justified in reinforcing Ian Hamilton with every man he had room for, and in concentrating all their energies on a success in the Dardanelles. It was not, however, till August that these operations could begin, and the plan had then miscarried.

A continuance of the offensive in the Dardanelles at that period, with strong reinforcements, might possibly have led to success; but on the 20th August, on the advice of General Joffre, and contrary to that of Sir John French and Sir Douglas Haig, the British Government had again switched back to the Western theatre of war.

The Loos—Champagne offensive had then in turn failed. But on the 25th September, on the very morning that the battles in the West began, the British Government, despite their crushing commitments in the two existing theatres, had agreed to the opening up of a third by the despatch of a large force to Salonika. The student of war might search in vain for a clearer instance of a distracted war policy and a consequent wasteful dissipation of force.

The problem which faced the Western Powers in 1915 was not dissimilar in its main essentials to that which faced them throughout the course of the war. Germany was the keystone

¹ Counting Mesopotamia there were three theatres of war, but the Mesopotamian operations in 1915 were sustained by British-Indian resources.

of the enemy's powers of resistance, and the primary objective of the Allies was the destruction of German morale. With that accomplished, Germany would be defeated, the resistance of her confederates would crumble, and the World War would be won. The defeat of Germany, therefore, was the main objective for all the Powers of the Entente, and the problem to be solved was how this end could be most quickly achieved. This settled, the plans decided on should have been followed with complete singleness of purpose. Even a bad plan, carried out with vigour and determination, is more likely to succeed than a good plan that is not pressed home.

England's difficulty in 1915 arose from her inability to decide between the rival policies of attacking Germany at her strongest point, on the Western front in France, or at her weakest point by way of the Dardanelles. With French soil under the heel of the invader, with Paris and the Channel ports menaced, and with the French nation clamouring for British assistance, it would have been difficult enough for the most skilled strategist to advise the British Government wisely and well. For a committee of civilian statesmen the task was impossible, and the British Government, by attempting both objectives at once, fell between two stools.

The choice depended upon so many factors, which must always remain incalculable, that the question of which of the two courses was the better must remain an absorbing topic. On the one hand it is plain that the opening of the Straits, and even the capture of Constantinople, would have been no adequate recompense for the loss of the Channel ports, the fall of Paris and the advance of the German armies to the line of the Loire. On the other hand, it may certainly be argued that if in 1915 the Allied line in the West, by adopting the strategic defensive, could have maintained its existing positions against any possible German attack, a resolute naval and military offensive at the Dardanelles, set in motion in the spring, and carried through with full determination by Britain and France together, would have opened the Dardanelles, captured the Turkish capital, resuscitated Russia by physical contact, cut off the Turks from every source of ammunition supply and gained the adherence of Bulgaria, Rumania and Greece. Anxiety for the safety of the Suez Canal would have ended; the Palestine operations would not have taken place; Russia's troops in the Caucasus would have been set free; the Turkish effort in Mesopotamia would have died of inanition.

Even these results, it is true, would not have ended the war; Germany, with all the advantages of her central position,



Imperial War Museum Photo.

TURKISH PRISONERS DESCENDING GULLY RAVINE UNDER ESCORT

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would still have had to be beaten. But it is hard to resist the opinion that such a success in the East would have shortened the war and averted incalculable suffering.

On the 7th October, with winter weather approaching, the chances of success in Gallipoli were fading into the distance, even without a fresh entanglement in a third theatre of war. Bulgaria was now joining the Central Powers, and, if Sir Ian Hamilton were not heavily reinforced before German help could reach the Turkish army, his last frail chance of opening the Narrows would finally disappear.

This was the situation which confronted the combined Staffs in London when at long last their advice was sought by the Government.

Further important news accumulated while these officers were considering their report. Strong Austro-German forces had crossed the Serbian frontier. Heavy storms had begun at Gallipoli; piers at Anzac and Suvla had been washed away and a large number of small craft destroyed. On the Western front, since the opening of Joffre's offensive, the Allied casualties had amounted to nearly a quarter of a million men, and little or no progress had been made in the last week.

It was also known at the War Office that though Sir John French and Sir Douglas Haig had originally been averse to an autumn attack in France, their attitude had now changed. They had now become anxious to resume the battle at the earliest possible moment, in the hope that a continuance of steady pressure might lead to important success. General Joffre on the other hand was known to disagree. Partly on account of shortage of ammunition, partly by reason of the French promise to send troops to Serbia, he had already decided to make no more attacks in France for at least three months.

After weighing all these considerations, the combined naval and military Staffs reported on the 9th October that they deprecated the despatch of more troops to Salonika, for it would no longer be possible to save Serbia or prevent reinforcements from reaching Constantinople. In these circumstances they were "unhesitatingly in favour of pursuing, if possible, the offensive in France, where it has recently had "distinctly promising results" They begged the Government to dissuade Joffre from delaying a new attack for three months.¹

¹ Though this suggestion was not acted on, two more actions were fought in France before the offensive finally died down. On 11th October

Oct. If, however, he could not be dissuaded, they agreed that Britain would be justified in using elsewhere any troops that could be made available; and they suggested that the most useful way to employ such troops would be in "a renewal of the attack in Gallipoli". They were of opinion that "a force of six British and two Indian divisions from France should suffice to complete the capture of the peninsula", and they recommended "that this force, organized as an army, under a selected commander, should be sent in the first instance to Egypt, there to be organized and prepared".

Attached as an appendix to this memorandum was a highly important note which Admiral Sir Henry Jackson, First Sea Lord, had written on the 7th October. Sir Henry urged that it would be sheer madness to send troops to Salonika, and that in his opinion Gallipoli was the only practical secondary operation of war. The army already there should be strengthened immediately, and the attack resumed with determination. He further suggested, and his high appointment added weight to his words, that "as soon as the army has secured the heights" the fleet should push into the Straits, regardless of losses, to reduce the Narrows forts. "An immediate decision", he claimed, "followed by instant action, appears essential. Further delay may result in disaster."

These appreciations did little to unite the widely divergent opinions still held by the members of the Dardanelles Committee.¹ Pulled in three different directions—to France by the combined Staffs, to Salonika by their recent promise to France, and to Gallipoli by the First Sea Lord's minute as well as by the negative hope that, even if too late to win a victory, heavy reinforcements in that theatre might at least prevent a disaster—this unwieldy council of ministers was unable to agree on the road to be taken.

Nothing definite had been decided about future action in Gallipoli since the truth had been realized—seven weeks earlier—that the August plans had failed. But it was now literally a matter of life and death. Not only was it almost certain that German munitions would be reaching the Turks by the first week of December. The arrival of winter weather might make

the French lost 2,200 men without appreciable gain; and on the 13th-14th, in an attempt to improve their positions two British divisions sustained the loss of another 6,000 men. Of this last action the official account states: "The fighting on the 13th-14th October had not improved the general situation in any way and had brought nothing but useless slaughter of infantry". "Military Operations, France and Belgium 1915", Vol. II. p. 388.

¹ Dardanelles Commission Report, ii. p. 53.

it impossible either to land a new army on the peninsula or to Oct. withdraw the existing force if evacuation were decided on. Every day, therefore, the situation was becoming more critical, and a definite decision—to get on or get out—was more and more important. But every day a decision was again postponed. On the 11th October Lord Kitchener telegraphed to Ian Hamilton to estimate the numbers he would lose in evacuation. On the same day Admiral de Robeck was asked by the Admiralty how many more troops he could maintain on the peninsula in addition to the existing army brought up to its full strength.

Ministerial agreement was hindered at this period by a growing mistrust of Sir Ian Hamilton's judgment. Just as in time of peace the uninstructed public will habitually blame the Government for every evil that befalls, so in time of war the easiest way to explain a failure is to belittle the commander-in-chief. Few commanders in the field can hope to survive a continued lack of success, and it was in these circumstances that much undue importance was attached by the Government to two documents brought to their notice at the end of September.

After Sir Frederick Stopford had been relieved of the command of the IX Corps he returned direct to England and forwarded to the War Office his own account of the Suvla operations. This report, which was in effect a defence of his action in Gallipoli, had not been shown to his late commander-in-chief before submission to the War Office. Drawn up less than a fortnight after the landing, and before the facts of the case could be fully known, it necessarily contained many inaccuracies. It levelled a number of veiled charges against Ian Hamilton's conduct of the operations. In particular it urged that his criticism of subordinate generals had been unmerited, and that the Turkish strength at Suvla had been far greater than G.H.Q., "who lived on an island at some distance from the "peninsula", had led the IX Corps to expect. General Stopford ended his report by stating that he had no personal grievance but courted the fullest enquiry.

On receipt of this document Lord Kitchener ordered four generals¹ serving in London to enquire into the conduct of the Suvla operations. Sir Ian Hamilton was given no chance of seeing and commenting on General Stopford's statement, and the only available evidence consisted of the orders and instructions issued before the operations began, Ian Hamilton's tele-

¹ General Sir Leslie Rundle, and Lieut.-Generals Sir James Wolfe-Murray, Sir Archibald Murray and Sir Henry Sclater.

Oct. graphic reports, and Stopford's written account of his own experiences.

The four general officers reported to Lord Kitchener: "We think that the whole series of tasks planned for the IX Corps is open to criticism, but we do not feel justified in suggesting such criticism at this period of the war without much fuller information from those actually on the spot". Lord Kitchener thereupon informed the Government that he had had the Suvla operations reviewed by a number of generals at the War Office and that this had resulted in "considerable criticism of Sir Ian Hamilton's leadership".

The other document brought to the notice of the Dardanelles Committee was a private letter written by an Australian journalist named Murdoch, who had recently arrived in England after a short visit to Imbros. This journalist had smuggled back to England an uncensored letter which an English war-correspondent had addressed to the Prime Minister. Mr. Murdoch had also written a letter to the Australian Premier, in the course of which, after cruelly defaming most of the officers and troops (other than Australian) at that time serving on the peninsula or on the lines of communication, he had levelled a violent attack on the Commander-in-Chief and the Chief of the General Staff. At the suggestion of Mr. Lloyd George, he had sent a copy of this letter to the Prime Minister, and Mr. Asquith, though subsequently admitting that many of its allegations were plainly untrue, had taken the unusual step of printing it as a State Paper and circulating it to members of the Government.

This, then, was the situation that confronted the Dardanelles Committee on the evening of the 11th October. Two conclusions were reached at this meeting. Accepting only a small portion of the final recommendation of the combined naval and military Staffs, it was resolved to despatch "an adequate and substantial force" to Egypt, but "without prejudice to its final destination". And as it seemed essential that a fresh brain should consider on the spot the rival claims of Gallipoli and Salonika as a secondary theatre of war, it was further resolved that a specially selected officer—Lord Kitchener or Sir Douglas Haig for choice—should be sent to the Mediterranean to advise as to where this force should be employed and what its task should be.¹

¹ These conclusions were not unanimous. They resulted in Sir Edward Carson, the Attorney-General, withdrawing from the Government, and a fortnight later he explained in the House of Commons that his reason for resigning was the Government's refusal to send immediate help to Serbia. In the course of his speech, he then read out, by permission of the Prime Minister, his letter of resignation, and the rash publication of this letter

The cares and anxieties of Mr. Asquith's Government were Oct. now increasing daily. The voluntary system of enlistment was on its last legs, and there was an urgent and increasing need for more men to maintain the armies in the field. There was still a shortage of munitions and even of rifles. The depressing lack of success on all fronts was leading to angry criticism of the higher direction of the war. It was being freely stated that a Cabinet of 22 members was far too unwieldy to grapple with war-time problems. Members of both Houses were clamouring for a statement and debate on the nation's war policy. In particular, the recent circulation of Mr. Murdoch's letter had fanned the flame of controversy on the subject of the Dardanelles. Every opponent of the Eastern theatre who had seen or heard of this letter was turning it to good account; on all sides the Gallipoli campaign was spoken of as a "failure" and a "tragedy";¹ and members of Parliament were asking for a select committee to enquire into the initiation and conduct of the operations.

Yet another anxiety now pressing upon the Government was the protection of London from the increasing activities of German airships. The capital had been raided on the 7th and 8th September; and though the total number of casualties was small,² the inadequacy of the arrangements to deal with this new menace was a matter of grave concern. Now, on the night of the 13th October, London was raided again—this time with increased accuracy. Again the loss of life was luckily small,³ but dwellers in the metropolis passed a very anxious night.

It was on the day after this raid that the Dardanelles Committee again assembled in Downing Street. The latest news from the Dardanelles was Sir Ian Hamilton's rough estimate of his losses in the event of evacuation. A withdrawal, he suggested, might probably entail the loss of half his force: he might be very lucky and do a great deal better; on the other

laid bare to every enemy country the secret of the Government's plan for a concentration of troops in the Eastern Mediterranean. "I could understand", the letter ran, "a policy of limiting all our actions to the Western theatre, and using all our resources there (which is, I think, in reality what the War Staff suggest). . . . But to send an army to Egypt to await action which may or which may not be possible on the report of a General to be sent to Gallipoli seems the most futile and hesitating decision that could be come to." *The Times*, 3rd Nov. 1915.

¹ "The Dardanelles operations hang like a mill-stone about our necks, and have brought upon us the most vast disaster that has happened in the course of the war." Sir Edward Carson in the House of Commons, 2nd Nov. 1915.

² 176 in the two raids.

³ Out of a total casualty roll of 199, the casualties in Central London amounted to 47 killed and 102 wounded.

Oct. hand, with raw troops at Suvla and black troops at Helles, there might be a real catastrophe.

In face of this telegram the Committee determined that Sir Ian Hamilton should be recalled, and that a new commander, who could bring a fresh and unbiased mind to bear on the Gallipoli problem, should be sent out in his place.

Next day Lord Kitchener telegraphed to Sir Ian that, though the Government fully appreciated his work, they had decided to make a change. General Sir Charles Monro, who had been chosen to succeed him, would bring out his own Chief of the General Staff, so Major-General Braithwaite should also return to England. Until General Monro could arrive General Birdwood would assume the temporary command of the Expeditionary Force.

Sir Charles Monro had won high distinction in France. There he had commanded in turn the 2nd Division, the I Corps and the Third Army, and had gained the confidence and affection of all ranks. A shrewd, hard-headed and capable soldier, he had a ripe judgment, a facility for making up his mind and sticking to it, and a most determined and independent will. He was heart and soul a "Westerner", and held with staunch conviction that every available man and every available gun should be massed on the Western front. There, alone, in his opinion, could the war be won, and from the moment of leaving London for the Eastern Mediterranean he was already persuaded that the wisest course to pursue—if such a course were practicable—was to abandon the Gallipoli enterprise.

As Sir Charles Monro could not arrive at Imbros till the 28th October,¹ his appointment had shelled for at least a fortnight the fateful decision which the Government would eventually have to make. Meanwhile Sir Ian Hamilton handed over the command to General Birdwood and sailed for England on the 17th October.

No British general has ever been given a more difficult task than that which confronted Sir Ian Hamilton from the outset of the operations. He and his army had been hurried out to Gallipoli without the semblance of a plan, and the

¹ He had wisely refused to start before finding out all he could in London of the situation in the Eastern Mediterranean. In this search he spent several days at the War Office and conferred with Lord Kitchener on 15th, 16th, 19th and 21st October. He eventually left London on the 22nd. Before leaving he was told that the Government had decided to send out a substantial force to Egypt, and that its future employment would probably depend upon his report; but at that time the only definite orders that had been issued were for the despatch of the 27th and 28th Divisions. See pages 397, 405, and Appendix 17.

strength of his force had borne no relation to the specific nature of its task. The element of surprise—in amphibious warfare the main essential to success—had been denied him; and lack of preparation and lack of secrecy had converted a daring but practical enterprise into a perilous and hazardous adventure. Yet Lord Kitchener had telegraphed on the 19th March—on the morning after the naval failure: “The passage of the Dardanelles must be forced, and if large military operations on the peninsula are necessary to clear the way, they must be undertaken, and must be carried through”. In the face of such instructions there could be no thought—to a man of Ian Hamilton’s temperament—of acting as one of his divisional commanders advised, and cabling home that the chance of success had gone.

It may indeed be claimed that Sir Ian Hamilton’s temperament was admirably suited to the hazardous task entrusted to him in April 1915. Resolution and dash, enthusiasm and self-confidence, imagination and great personal courage—these were the qualities demanded from the leader of such an enterprise, and Sir Ian Hamilton possessed them all. The initial landing ended in a success which stirred the pulse of the world, and it was mainly the lack of reserves of men and ammunition that prevented a triumph which might now be regarded as the master-stroke of the war. Throughout the summer months, when the Expeditionary Force was languishing for reinforcements, the Commander-in-Chief’s never-failing spirits were of remarkable value to his side, and when, in August, a new corps was sent to him, he again succeeded in effecting a brilliant tactical surprise. But on that occasion, though the procrastination of the IX Corps was the main cause that robbed him of victory, it cannot be denied that the too-implicit confidence which, on the morning after the landing, he placed in an untried leader was to some extent to blame.

Some of Sir Ian Hamilton’s troubles, indeed, were undoubtedly due to the defects of his own qualities. His optimism and buoyant spirits, infecting as they did all who came in contact with him, were invaluable at the worst moments. But they had inclined him, as soon as fortune smiled, to make light of the obstacles still to be encountered. Before his departure for Gallipoli Lord Kitchener had pointed out that big demands for reinforcements for Gallipoli might embarrass his own relations with the French. Sir Ian Hamilton had taken the promise he made on that occasion too literally. He had refrained from asking for a man or a gun more than his sanguine hopes considered absolutely necessary; and his

modest demands had increased the Government's expectation of success, intensified their subsequent disappointment, and hastened his own undoing.

Oct. Two days after Sir Ian Hamilton's departure Lord Kitchener telegraphed for General Birdwood's views of the situation on the peninsula. Birdwood replied that the only place where further progress was feasible was on the northern flank at Suvla. There, provided units were brought up to strength, and two fresh divisions sent out from England with plenty of ammunition, he would hope to make headway. But the best method of ending the Gallipoli campaign would be to combine this pressure on the peninsula with the landing of a "really good force" on the Asiatic side of the Straits.

On the 23rd October Lord Kitchener replied that Birdwood's appreciation had considered only offensive action on the peninsula. He also wanted to know if the army could withstand prolonged attacks by the Turks supported by German munitions.

Birdwood's answer reflected the grave concern with which attacks of this nature would be regarded by his corps commanders. There was a shortage of material for overhead cover and revetment; winter weather would make very difficult the landing of such material; and the health of the garrison could probably not withstand a prolonged strain. The front-line trenches might perhaps be made secure; but it would be impossible to protect the beaches from shell fire, or even the troops in support or those resting in reserve. The only solution was to drive the enemy further inland, and so increase the depth of the British positions; this would necessitate heavy reinforcements in men, ammunition and guns.

This message was a further proof of the need for an early decision with regard to the Dardanelles.

AUTUMN EVENTS IN GALLIPOLI

The change of command in Gallipoli provides a convenient point at which to take up the tale of events upon the peninsula during the months of September and October.

Sept. The beginning of September had found the M.E.F. committed everywhere to trench warfare which, in its main characteristics, differed little from that on the Western front. If the recent fighting had exhausted the British offensive effort, it had similarly left the Turks in no condition to attack. On the three fronts, however, the enemy retained all the ad-

vantages of position, and it was fortunate for the invaders that Sept. the Turkish stock of gun ammunition was now running low and that one shell in three was failing to burst. In this one respect the British troops on the peninsula were better off than their comrades on the Western front; but this advantage was more than counterbalanced by the absence of any back areas where resting troops could get away for a time from the sights and sounds of war.

From the nasty entrenchments and battle positions of the IX Corps at Suvla a defensive system was gradually evolved such as already existed at Anzac and Helles. In some places—notably on the fronts of the 29th and 53rd Divisions—it was necessary to take up more advanced positions in order to straighten and improve the line. This was accomplished without serious fighting. The defences on the Kiretch Tepe ridge, however, proved difficult to organize, and were still in an unsatisfactory state at the end of September. As the rocky ground made digging impossible, breastworks, in which sandbags were supplemented by small boulders, took the place of trenches. Opposite the left of the line, and about 600 yards in front, Green Knoll showed up prominently; but the approaches to it, through high scrub and across several gullies, were difficult to negotiate. There was some doubt as to whether the knoll was permanently occupied by the Turks.

Mining and bombing operations were the chief developments upon the Anzac and Helles fronts. At Helles more and more use was made of trench mortars, and a special mining company was formed. After a strong draft of tunnellers arrived in December, this unit was called the 254th Tunnelling Company R.E.

Sickness—chiefly dysentery and kindred complaints, and general debility—continued to take its toll of all ranks, the evacuations during October averaging over 200 per day from Helles, rather more from Anzac, and nearly 300 per day from Suvla.¹ The drafts that reached the peninsula during the autumn were not enough to make this wastage good, and, apart from the 2nd Australian Division, the dribble of new forma-

¹ Br.-Gen. A. Skeen's health broke down in September, and Lieut.-Colonel C. B. D. White (G.S.O.I. 1st Aust. Div.) became General Birdwood's chief staff officer; General Walker (commanding 1st Aust. Div.) was wounded on 13th October, and Br.-Gen. J. J. T. Hobbs, from the divisional artillery, who succeeded him, fell ill in November and gave place to Br.-Gen. H. G. Chauvel 1st A.L.H. Brigade. Major-Gen. J. G. Legge was also invalided at the end of November, and Br.-Gen. W. Holmes, 5th Aust. Bde., assumed command of the 2nd Aust. Div. Br.-Gen. Paul Kenna, V.C. [3rd (Notts & Derby) Bde.] was mortally wounded by a shell on 29th August.

Sept.- tions—in no case larger than a dismounted Yeomanry brigade
Oct. about 2,000 strong—could only be used for attachment to
existing divisions.

At Suvla, the 1/1st Scottish Horse Brigade¹ arrived from home at the beginning of September and was attached to the 2nd Mounted Division. The Newfoundland Battalion, coming from England *via* Egypt, landed later in the month and replaced the 1/5th Royal Scots in the 29th Division. These Edinburgh Territorials had received no drafts² and were too weak in numbers for effective employment at the front, so the remnants of their fine battalion were sent back to Mudros. The 2/3rd and 2/1st London, which arrived on the 24th September, also went to the 29th Division. These battalions were followed by the Highland Mounted Brigade,³ which provided another reinforcement for General Peyton's 2nd Mounted Division.³ On the 9th October the 1/2nd S. Western Mounted Brigade⁴ disembarked and was attached to the 11th Division, but joined General Peyton's command a month later. Territorial field companies for the Yeomanry were provided by the arrival during October of the 1/1st Kent from England and the 2/1st Welsh and 1/2nd Kent from Egypt.

Against these reinforcements must be set the departure from Suvla of the 10th Division—two infantry brigades and three field companies—all of which had left by the 2nd October. A month later the two composite brigades, numbering only 1,656 rifles, all that remained of the original five brigades of the 2nd Mounted Division,⁵ were reported to be in such poor health that they were sent to Mudros for a rest. They were not allowed to return, and General Peyton received in replacement a brigade of the 53rd Division.

At Anzac, although troops of the 2nd Australian Division had arrived from Egypt in time to participate in the Hill 60 fighting, the division, which brought no artillery, was not complete until the middle of September.⁶ As soon as it had taken

¹ 1/1st, 2/1st and 3/1st Scottish Horse.

² 1st Lovat's Scouts; 2nd Lovat's Scouts; Fife & Forfar Yeomanry.

³ General Mahon had resumed command of the 10th Division on 23rd August.

⁴ 1/1st R. Devon Yeo.; 1/1st R. Devon Hussars; 1/1st W. Somerset Yeo.

⁵ It had landed 4,796 strong in August. No drafts had been received.

⁶ The transport *Southland*, carrying troops of the 6th Australian Brigade and Major-Gen. J. G. Legge commanding the division, was torpedoed by UB 14 30 miles south of Lemnos on 2nd September. The discipline was excellent, though Colonel R. Linton and 32 men were drowned by the capsizing of a boat. The ship was saved by the exertions of Lieut.-Cdr. H. N. Hardy, commanding H.M.S. *Raccoon*, who came on board with a party of stokers and, with the assistance of Captain N. Wellington and other officers and men of the brigade, raised steam and got the vessel into Mudros.

over a portion of the front, detachments of the other divisions were sent in rotation to Mudros for a short rest. About this time the Indian brigade was reinforced by the 1/4th Gurkha Rifles, which had fought in France with the Lahore Division; and on the 1st October a double company of Patiala Infantry (Imperial Service troops) arrived from the Egyptian command to strengthen the 14th Sikhs. The 29th Brigade of the 10th Division, ordered to Salonika, left on the 28th September, but early in October the 1/1st Eastern Mounted Brigade¹ from England landed at Arzac and was attached to the 54th Division.²

In the southern zone, after the departure of the 29th Division in August, a severe strain was put upon the troops at Helles—42nd, 52nd³ and R.N. Divisions—as all three formations were very much below strength. At the end of September General Davies could only muster 15,212 effectives, the unfortunate R.N.D. being represented by less than 3,900 of this total.⁴ The 87th Brigade, which arrived from Suvla soon afterwards, took over part of the French front later in the month. Other arrivals during October were the 1/1st S. Eastern Mounted Brigade⁵ from England, attached to the 42nd Division; the 1/1st Lowland Mounted Brigade⁶ and 1/3rd Kent Field Coy. R.E. (T.F.), also from England, attached to the 52nd Division; and the 2/2nd and 2/4th London, from Malta *via* Egypt, which went to the R.N.D. The French troops which, under General Bailloud's command, were withdrawn from Helles at the beginning of October, included both white regiments and also the two regiments composed of Zouaves and Foreign Legion. General Brulard was left to hold the French front with twelve battalions of Senegalese and Colonials (7,600 rifles), the field batteries and a few heavy guns.

As may be imagined, the attachment of this heterogeneous collection of units to existing divisions created many difficulties of command, administration and supply. Moreover, a considerable proportion of the infantry drafts were only half-trained; the Yeomanry, adaptable as they proved to be, were quite new to infantry methods; and such had been the loss in

¹ 1/1st Welsh Horse; 1/1st Norfolk Yeo.; 1/1st Suffolk Yeo.

² The 13th Div. had been exchanged with the IX Corps for the 54th Div., which arrived from Suvla early in September and took over the extreme left of the Anzac front.

³ Major-Gen. G. G. A. Egerton was succeeded by Major-Gen. Hon. H. A. Lawrence in the command of the 52nd Div. on 17th September.

⁴ There were 7 weak battalions organized as 2 brigades. Major-Gen. Paris asked for the return of the Anson Bn., still employed on the beaches at Suvla and Arzac, but the Ansons did not arrive until the end of October.

⁵ 1/1st E. Kent Mtd. Rifles; 1/1st W. Kent Yeo.; 1/1st Sussex Yeo.

⁶ 1/1st Ayrshire Yeo.; 1/1st Lanark Yeo.

Oct. regimental officers that there were few battalions which had not now to rely upon young and very inexperienced company and platoon commanders. In sum, the reinforcements could only retard the rate at which the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force was dwindling. By the 10th October the troops at, or *en route* for, Gallipoli numbered 114,087; if all units had been up to establishment they would have mustered 200,540.¹ It was obvious, indeed, that the Expeditionary Force lacked the numbers, organization and physical fitness essential to the success of any considerable offensive operation.

Aug.-Sept. On the 22nd August the daily ration of artillery ammunition at Helles was again reduced to two rounds per gun, apart from counter-battery work and special shoots; and as soon as the fighting died down at Suvla and Anzac a similar economy was enjoined upon those fronts. The measure was a precaution in view of the uncertainty of the shipments of ammunition from England and the vagaries of the weather, and was intended to ensure that a reserve should be at hand in case of emergency. Actually the supplies received proved adequate for the not very active trench warfare of the autumn months.

The four 18-pdr. batteries of the LV Brigade R.F.A. (10th Division) had all reached the Suvla front from Mudros by the 10th September, and two anti-aircraft guns were landed on the 13th. No guns were withdrawn from the peninsula as a consequence of the departure of the 10th Division, and on the 25th October the LX Brigade R.F.A. (11th Division) arrived at Suvla from Egypt.

Before the end of August two batteries of the LVI Brigade R.F.A. (10th Division) had replaced the 3rd N.Z. Battery and the 6th Australian Battery at Helles, and the I Australian F.A. Brigade left for Anzac at the beginning of October, after additional units of the 42nd Division artillery² had landed at Helles. In September, also, General Davies received two 6-inch guns

¹ The details are :

	<i>Strength</i>	<i>Establishment</i>
Helles	22,783	53,737
Anzac	31,300	63,973
Suvla	41,622	74,448
Mudros (resting, etc.)	10,000	
Miscellaneous units <i>en route</i> . .	8,382	8,382
	<hr/> 114,087	<hr/> 200,540

² 4th Bty. and 1 section 6th Bty. (1/1st E. Lancs. Bde.); 19th and 20th Btys. (1/3rd E. Lancs Bde.).

of the 43rd Siege Battery which came into action at Gully Beach; Oct.- and in October, after the departure of some French batteries, Nov. the remainder of the LVI Brigade R.F.A. arrived from Egypt.

Anzac had sent the 1/4th (Lowland) Howitzer Battery to Suvla on the 19th August, but the 17th Siege Battery (four 6-inch howitzers) arrived in September, and the 6th N.Z. Howitzer Battery and various other guns and howitzers came in October. The heavier pieces were only got into position in the precipitous Anzac country after herculean efforts and the display of much ingenuity and resource.

At the beginning of November there were no less than 124 guns and howitzers at Helles exclusive of the French, which amounted to 61; 105 at Anzac; and 94 at Suvla.¹ So far as the number of guns went—though it must be borne in mind that all were not fit for action—the artillery at Helles was considered sufficient; but Br.-General S. C. U. Smith,² the senior artillery officer at Army headquarters, considered that an increase was needed at Suvla and Anzac and a bigger proportion of 4.5-in. howitzers on all three fronts. At Anzac it was difficult to find positions for the field guns already there, whilst in the much more open Suvla country the problem was to find suitable 18-pdr. positions that were protected from enfilade fire.

The lack of reserve guns and spare parts made it impossible to replace completely the casualties caused by wear and tear—the recoil springs of the 60-pdrs. were always giving trouble—and by damage from enemy fire. Moreover, the workshops at Helles, near W Beach, were frequently shelled, causing loss of valuable personnel and further damage to guns.

Artillery telephonic communications, especially at Helles, had been organized on a satisfactory basis. Lines in front of group commanders were now in duplicate and even in triplicate so far as the supply of cable permitted. Co-operation with the

1	howitzers								
	10-pdr.	12-pdr.	15-pdr.	18-pdr.	60-pdr.	6"	4.5"	5"	6"
Suvla	8	64	8	..	8	4	..
Anzac	12	1	..	52	8	20	7
Helles	..	6	24	68	8	2	4	8	4

The French had 39 field and mountain guns and 22 pieces of heavier calibre; of the latter, 8 engaged the Asiatic batteries and 2 covered the Straits.

Anzac had two 3-pdrs., two 4" guns and a 4.7" gun.

Suvla had two 13-pdrs.

A 15-inch howitzer, with tractor, which had reached Mudros weeks before the August operations began, remained in the ship which brought it until the autumn. The task of landing it on the peninsula was too formidable, even if a suitable firing position could be found. Eventually it was sent to Egypt and disembarked at Alexandria.

² He had arrived at Gallipoli in August as Br.-General R.A., IX Corps.

Aug.- air service was good, many of the observers being artillery
Sept. officers.

The gun support rendered by the fleet had been governed for some months by the measures taken to avoid loss from enemy submarines. Most of the larger warships were collected in the harbours of Mudros and Kephala, but in Suvla Bay, protected by booms and nets, there were always two and sometimes three battleships at anchor. One "bulged-cruiser," one monitor and a destroyer were always available for work outside the bay. Off Anzac were one "bulged-cruiser", one monitor and one or two destroyers. Helles always had a destroyer off the left flank, and other support could be summoned at need. A monitor at Rabbit Island watched the guns on the Asiatic shore. The system of close co-operation between ships and shore worked satisfactorily in all three zones, the static warfare which had supervened presenting fewer problems than offensive operations had done.

A week after he had assumed command at Helles, General Davies asked on the 14th August for special stores and material needed for a winter campaign. Among his chief demands were hutments and road metal. General Byng occupied himself with the same question at Suvla almost as soon as he arrived. More engineer assistance, too, was badly needed by the IX Corps in order to cope with the work on winter preparations.¹

There was indeed much to be done, and an extraordinary variety of stores and material to be imported, if the troops on the peninsula were to be maintained in a reasonable state of comfort and security during the months of bad weather which lay ahead. Amongst the R.E. stores ordered at this time were 5,000 tons of galvanized iron, as much hutting timber as was procurable in Egypt and England, rolling stock and 40 miles of rails for a 2'-6" tramway, 500 trench pumps, 10,000 oil stoves. Other requisitions were for clothing and blankets, horse-rugs, tents, tarpaulins, trench boots and frost cogs.²

Anzac was still largely dependent upon sea-borne supplies of water, and the reserve tanks offered little margin for emergen-

¹ No. 5 R. Anglesey Siege Co. R.E. (S.R.) landed on 10th September for work on the piers, etc. Map 4 shows the eventual development of the harbour works at Suvla, which spread westward in an endeavour to escape the attentions of the Turkish gunners. At Kangaroo Beach the Australian Naval Bridging Train, whose work on the construction of piers at Suvla was throughout most valuable, established an R.E. dump and a camp which were "a model of routine and orderliness to the rest of the community."

² The preparations for a winter campaign received special attention at the meeting of the Dardanelles Committee on the 31st August, and the War Office did its utmost to meet the demands of the M.E.F. A forecast of probable weather conditions throughout the period October 1915-April 1916 was obtained, and Dr. Wedderburn was appointed meteorologist to the Force.

cies in the case of bad weather. There was a three days' reserve at Helles, where local supplies were expected to suffice until the rains came. Suvla had no reserve, but there were many wells in the plain, and the distribution of water was the chief problem. The authorities proposed to send out two distilling plants, one for Anzac and one for Imbros rest camp, each with a capacity of 100 tons (22,400 gallons) per day. Sept.-
Oct.

At the beginning of September the policy of G.H.Q. was to proceed with the accumulation of one month's supplies on all parts of the peninsula; but the consequent demands for labour at Mudros, Imbros and the peninsula beaches were very hard to meet. All three corps commanders had to provide large parties of men, who could ill be spared from the trenches, for heavy work at the landing places. This strain on the troops, who were mostly in poor physical condition, was relieved in some measure by the arrival of several units for work on the lines of communication; and by the recruitment of Egyptian, Greek and Maltese labourers,¹ though many of these civilian workers were of little use if employed under shell fire.

The arrival of winter stores and material—all surplus to the routine requirements of the M.E.F.—was bound to be uncertain. It depended, in the first place, upon the shipping available at home, and there was the enemy submarine menace to reckon with during the voyage to the Ægean. Owing to lack of dock facilities at Mudros, ships had to be used as floating warehouses and cleared gradually as the stores they contained were required.² When any of these ships were badly needed elsewhere they were liable to be sent away, with holds half empty, to bring up more stores from Alexandria. In Mudros harbour frequent high winds were making more and more difficult the transshipment of such heavy cargoes as timber, corrugated iron and bulky technical stores.

On the 8th October a heavy gale drove three motor-lighters ashore at Suvla, where 90 feet of West Beach pier was washed away, and the tramway damaged. At Anzac, on the same evening, the landing of the Eastern Mounted Brigade was delayed, both piers at Anzac Cove badly damaged, and a water-boat driven on to the beach. Then, on the 27th October, a storm

¹ At the Anzac beaches there worked in the autumn: 27th Labour Coy. A.S.C.; detachment Anson Bn. from Suvla; detachments 37th Army Troops Coy. R.E.; 1st Garrison Bn. Essex Regiment; Egyptian Labour Corps; Maltese Labour Corps. A detachment of the 1st Garrison Bn. Royal Scots went to Helles, where 1,255 Greek labourers were installed by the end of October. To Suvla were allotted 800 civilian labourers of various kinds.

² In August there were 16 of these ships at Mudros, and the demurrage paid on one of them alone was at the rate of £145,000 per annum.

Oct.- stopped all boat work at Anzac, and the piers could not be used
Nov. for two days. A sudden storm on the 31st caused another suspension of work; there was a certain amount of damage to piers; and six lighters and a paddle tug were driven ashore.

The Helles landing places also suffered considerably, and it is no matter for surprise that the beginning of November found the VIII Corps complaining of the non-arrival of urgently needed stores. The list included 2,000,000 sandbags, material for wire entanglements, winter clothing, tarpaulins and gum boots; and this on the very threshold of winter.



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WATSON'S PIER, ANZAC COVE, IN ROUGH WEATHER

The piles of boxes were to protect working-parties from Turkish shrapnel

Australian War Memorial Photo.